

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A system for performing reconciliation of financial records, comprising:
  - a server including a file transfer service that is operable to receive a plurality of files from a plurality of distributed entities, the plurality of files respectively storing data representative of financial transactions respectively recorded by the plurality of distributed entities;
  - a reconciliation software package configured to operate on at least a subset of the plurality of files; and
  - an application, other than the reconciliation software package, operating on the server, that allows the reconciliation software package to access the data in the plurality of files in order to perform reconciliation.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the file transfer service is consistent with the File Transfer protocol (FTP).
3. The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of files are stored in folder groups by database in accordance with predetermined business relationship among the entities.
4. The system of claim 1, further comprising means for monitoring files received from the distributed entities and indicating whether at least one of the plurality of files has not been timely received.
5. The system of claim 1, further comprising means for sweeping files received at the server to other locations.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the means for sweeping comprises means for versioning the files received.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising means for determining and displaying the status of tasks being performed by each of the databases.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising means for providing status information to end users from whom the plurality of files are initially received.

9. A method of performing financial records reconciliation, comprising:

- recording a plurality of financial transactions;
- storing data representative of a first portion of the financial transactions in a first file and data representative of a second portion of the financial transaction in a second file;
- sending the first and second files to a central server;
- ascertaining whether the first and second files are timely received, and if not, initiating a notification procedure;
- sweeping the first and second files to predetermined locations on the central server;
- performing financial reconciliation on the data in the first and second files; and
- displaying status information with respect to the state of files receipt and the step of performing financial reconciliation.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the data are stored in the files by different business entities.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the data are stored in the files in accordance with a format expected by a system that performs the financial reconciliation.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein different instances of the system that performs the financial reconciliation operate in conjunction with the files at the predetermined locations.

13. The method of claim 9, further comprising identifying one of the first and second files as not being timely received.

14. The method of claim 9, further comprising renaming the first and second files.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising appending names of the first and second files with at least one of a date and a time stamp.

16. The method of claim 9, wherein the predetermined locations store files of business entities that are related to each other.

17. The method of claim 9, further comprising performing financial reconciliation between a third file and only one of the first and second files.

18. The method of claim 9, further comprising performing financial reconciliation between a third file and both of the first and second files.

19. The method of claim 9, further comprising performing financial reconciliation between the first and the second files.

20. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of displaying status information comprises simultaneously displaying names of the predetermine locations, and at least one of the first and second files.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of displaying status information comprises indicating a state of a task by highlighting at least some displayed information with predetermined colors.

22. The method of claim 9, further comprising maintaining a status information web page for end users to view.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the web page comprises a portion in which messages can be posted to inform end users of special information.

24. A method for electronic file handling, comprising:  
receiving a plurality of electronic files at a central computer;  
automatically checking for receipt of the electronic files against a list of electronic files expected to be received to ascertain whether files in the list of electronic files expected have been received;

storing individual files of the plurality of electronic files in a plurality of locations that will be accessed by multiple instances of an application;

accessing respective ones of the plurality of electronic files stored in the plurality of locations with the instances of the application and performing data matching with respect to at least one of the plurality of electronic files; and

providing status information with respect to receipt of the files and a status of the data matching.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the electronic files represent collections of financial transactions.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the data matching is part of financial reconciliation.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the financial reconciliation is performed only with respect to data in one of the plurality of electronic files.

28. The method of claim 26, wherein the financial reconciliation is performed with respect to data in two of the plurality of electronic files.

29. The method of claim 26, wherein the financial reconciliation is performed with respect to data in at least two of the plurality of files and data in a separate file.

30. The method of claim 26, wherein a system for performing the financial reconciliation is resident on a server other than the central server.

31. The method of claim 24, wherein the multiple instances of the application are operating on different servers.

32. The method of claim 24, further comprising monitoring reports generated by the multiple instances of the application.

33. The method of claim 32, further comprising sweeping generated reports to predetermined locations.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the predetermined locations comprise locations on the central computer.